

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of reforming our Nation's broken mental health care system.

Too often we are reminded that the country's mental health care system is not working nearly as well as should be the case. Many Americans hide behind the curtain of shame and insecurity while many others lack access, assistance, or even information on how they may receive treatment.

It is a vicious cycle, where the vulnerable who need the most care are instead left out of society, unemployable, and, in some cases, a danger to themselves and others.

Recent data suggests that fewer than one-third of Americans with diagnosable mental illness actually get treatment. Experts also estimate that more than half of those who suffer from severe mental disorders do not receive treatment in any given year.

At least 25 percent of returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan will experience some type of mental health condition. We owe our servicemen and -women and veterans this effort to get them the care they need and deserve.

I am proud to partner with Democratic Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI of California, with whom I serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee, in recently introducing a bill to significantly expand access and strengthen community mental health and behavioral health services across the country.

The Expand Excellence in Mental Health Care Act aims to expand mental health care planning grants in two dozen States, including New Jersey, through an initiative based on our 2014 Excellence in Mental Health Act that was signed into law by President Obama in 2014.

This measure is directly tackling one of the most significant mental health care challenges: access. The Expand Excellence in Mental Health Act will enable more States to experiment with the tools and practices to fix this broken system.

By expanding the law to include more States, we encourage greater collaboration and testing to find out what solutions work, how best to care for those who need treatment, and what we can do to keep the people of the United States safe.

The Excellence in Mental Health Care Act is one of the most significant works Congress has already passed into law on mental health care. We should expand it and keep the momentum going.

I am also proud to be working with Republican Congressman TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania on this issue. Dr. MURPHY, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, has been using his expertise to lead a serious discussion in the House Energy and Commerce Committee on this critical issue.

His Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which I am proud to cosponsor, takes a clinical approach to

supporting families and individuals undergoing sudden or long-term mental health crises. The bill views those who need care through the mental health lens, not just through the criminal justice system.

Our work on these bills is part of a larger conversation on improving mental health care in this country. These bills will help struggling families who seek the best care for their loved ones. It will help those who fear stigma to get the care they need and will give our servicemen and -women and veterans the care they deserve.

I urge support for these measures, and I welcome all good ideas to the table for reforming our mental health care system.

CELEBRATING GEORGE ZANDER'S LEGACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and celebrate the life of a magnificent human being, remarkable leader, and close personal friend, Mr. George Zander of Palm Springs, California.

Many in our community knew George as a strident advocate for equality. George was a gentle man with a burning passion to make our Nation a more perfect Union, particularly for our LGBT brothers and sisters.

In my years working in the Coachella Valley, I, like so many others in our community, knew George as a colleague, adviser, and, above all, a dear friend.

George left this world on December 10, 2015. Nonetheless, his vision, passion, and vigorous strength to fight for a more just Coachella Valley, a more just Nation, and, ultimately, a more just world, are what remain.

George's legacy is one of social justice. For over three decades, he was actively engaged in the communities that make up the desert of the Coachella Valley. He was a leader among us and steadfastly guided our community toward a more inclusive and welcoming place.

So today I would like to take a moment to memorialize the life of George Zander, whose legacy will live on for future generations, not just in the Coachella Valley, but in the history of our Nation.

As a young man, George heeded President Kennedy's call to service and joined the Peace Corps, where it became clear that he was a natural leader.

His leadership and advocacy for the LGBT community spanned decades and began in a time where it was far less politically or socially acceptable to do so, but that didn't stop him.

In Seattle, Washington, George was a member of the first openly gay and lesbian association, called the Dorian Group. This vanguard organization advocated for the advancement of the

rights of LGBT individuals at a difficult time in our Nation's history.

It took great courage, but George was never one to shy away from taking a stand. George had a passion for public service and a sincere faith that our representative government plays a role in improving lives.

He worked alongside his good friend, Seattle's mayor Ed Murray, was chair of the King County Democratic Party, and worked for the 1996 Clinton-Gore campaign. Later, moving to San Francisco, he worked side by side with Cleve Jones, another prominent LGBT rights activist.

From Washington to San Francisco, to our beautiful desert in the Coachella Valley, George made an enormous impact. After moving to the Valley, he worked in the office of the great Senator BOXER.

He was a member of the Palm Springs Police Advisory Board, the Palm Springs Police Department LGBT Outreach Committee, and vice chair of the Warm Sands Neighborhood Organization.

George was a contributor for the LGBT publication, *The Bottom Line*, cofounded the Desert-Stonewall Democrats, and later became the Palm Springs field officer manager for Equality California.

George played a key role in advocating for laws that protect the LGBT community locally and statewide, working tirelessly to defeat proposition 8. He also collaborated with other local LGBT groups, such as the Palm Springs Human Rights Campaign, the LGBT Center, Desert AIDS Project, and Trans Palm Springs.

Mr. Speaker, George was a true leader who was the victim of a hate crime weeks before his death. I condemn these acts. There should be no space for these types of actions toward any human being, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

For more than three decades, George spearheaded efforts advocating for human rights and equality for all in my district and across the Nation.

George was not only an extraordinary leader, activist, friend, and husband, but, overall, a gentle, loving, and caring human being.

In honor of George Zander, let us pay our respects and never forget his legacy. Let us continue fighting for a more just and tolerant world.

THE NEED TO STAND UP AGAINST ASSAD AND RUSSIAN WAR CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, last week a U.N. panel released a deeply troubling report on the grave and horrific atrocities taking place across Syria. The report was mandated by the U.N. Human Rights Commission to investigate and record all violations of international law since March 2011.